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"Our elephants having been brought to us at an early hour, we load them immediately and set out.

Our convoy comprises seven animals, smaller than those we had in India. Ours carry only 100 tchangs (2 1/2 cwt.). They are owned by a few families and not by the villagers in common. An animal fifteen years old is worth from six to seven tchangs, or from about 480 to 560 rupees. The one I am riding is valued at 640 rupees. The elephants require much care, which is the more readily given them as they represent a fortune for their owners. They are liable to fall ill and suffer particularly from diarrhœa. They are then treated with indogo and sugar cane.

Each elephant has two men to tend it. They take turns in driving it, in riding on its neck and in walking behind it. The man who walks behind often lops off small branches for the animal to eat. At night, one of them sleeps near the aoudah, while the other remains with the elephant. Our saddles are attached to the animals, but changed several times a night to allow them to feed on the pastures.

I am pleased to find again these good big beasts with which I passed such a pleasant month in India. Although the keepers appear to me to be kinder here, the elephants are less intelligent, or rather not so well trained; for, as elsewhere, they were captured wild. They are not very prolific in India when domesticated, but in Cambodia, on the contrary, our interpreter says, they are more so. The father of Takiate who has owned two for the last fifteen years, has had a young one which he sold to the king."

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inside is lacquered red.

The pirogues are manned by forty or fifty oarsmen who half [225] [Illustration] [226] [Blank page] [227] crouch and half sit in pairs on what amount to thwarts made of bamboo and joined to a framework. The oarsmen face forward as they paddle, holding their blade in both hands and not supporting it on any point of the boat. A pirogue chief, usually a mandarin, is in the prow, and in the stern is the pilot, who jumps about and stimulates the whole crew with his shouts and gestures. Amidships there are sometimes musicians, with kene, gong and tom-tom, and two or three trained men who, their belts [Illustration here] adorned with enormous jointed "lingams," dance the "Phallic" standing up with their feet on the edges of the pirogue and declaim occasional odes and improvisations the terms of which are extremely crude.(1). In their songs they invite beings,

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(1) In southern Laos the men who perform these dances hold grotesque masks in front of their faces with their hands.

plants and elements to unite, combine and fertilize one another so as to maintain "Life" in all its forms on the surface of the earth.

The crews of the different racing pirogues are clothed in different colors, like the jackets of our jockeys, and they vie ardently with one another, making the water fly to surpass their own efforts. The crew which reaches the finish line first manifests its enthusiasm by [228] standing up in the pirogue, uttering shouts of triumph and brandishing the oars. Oftentimes all these uncoordinated movements result in throwing everybody into the water, but the pirogue is soon righted and emptied to the accompaniment of roars of laughter and the crew members take up their posts again, ready for a new race.

Racing pirogues are not launched until the time when they are to be used. Ordinarily they are stored on sawhorses and under sheds on the grounds of certain pagodas whose bonzes are responsible for their upkeep, and for storing the oars and accessories and clothing of the oarsmen.

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Certain pirogues are held in common by the inhabitants of a village, while others are the property of particular rich men, muong chiefs or high mandarins who have had them built at their own expense and pay for their upkeep and for that of their crew of oarsmen. In Laos a man will become the owner of a racing pirogue as in France one might become the owner of a racing stable. The racehorse

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s the long pirogue, and the jockeys are the oarsmen. Nor will it be n vain to remark that, as in our races, heavy wagers are often laid by the owners and the lovers of this kind of sport.

Thais or Phou-Thais. The Thais or Phou-Thais are divided into four distinct groups. These are:

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1. The Khao-Thais (white);
2. The Dam-Thais (black);
3. The Deng-Thais (red);
4. The Neua-Thais (northern).

The Khao-Thais are the result of marriages between Chinese men and Dam-Thai women, or vice versa, although the former case is the most frequent. They do not form large agglomerations, but only isolated family groups in the midst of the surrounding population. They are found only in the northern part of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, a territory which is dependent on Laos from the ethnographic point of view but administratively attached to Tonkin.

The following is what is known of their origin: [229] [Illustration] [230] [Blank page] [231]

"Around 1600 a rebel Chinese leader assembled a few partisans, set sail from Canton and landed at Haiphong. From there he went on to Bac-Ninh, continually increasing the number of his men. At Bac-Ninh the rebel leader received an envoy from the king of Annam, who asked him to help put down the Thais and the Muongs of the Black River. The Chinese leader accepted, and after leaving Bac-Ninh he went to Lao-Kay, from which point he soon entered the province of the Sib-Sing-Chau-Thais. After defeating the Thais and the Muongs he was given this province out of gratitude for his help. His troops, worn out by the campaign, settled in the country and lost no time in marrying Thai women. It was from such unions that the white Thais were born" (1).

(1) E. Picanon, op. cit. [Le Laos français, Paris, 1901.]

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Dam-Thais and Deng-Thais. These two varieties have a common origin and belong to the same family (2). The different names which

(2) Thais are found in nearly all of Laos, where they are scattered among the Laotian population. They are particularly numerous in the Hua-Pahn, where they are in the majority in certain muongs.